

## Chapter 17

### Religion

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### Chapter Outline

- Defining Religion
- The Significance of Religion in U.S. Society
- Forms of Religion
- Sociological Theories of Religion
- World Religions and Religious Diversity

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### Chapter Outline

- Diversity and Religious Belief
- Religious Organizations
- Becoming Religious
- Social and Political Attitudes: The Impact of Religion
- Religion and Social Change

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## Defining Religion

1. Religion is institutionalized.
2. Religion is a feature of groups.
3. Religions are based on beliefs that are considered sacred, as distinguished from profane.

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## Defining Religion

4. Religion establishes values for behavior.
5. Religion establishes norms for behavior.
6. Religion provides answers to questions of ultimate meaning.

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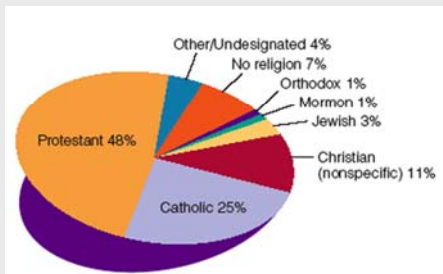
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## Measuring Religiosity




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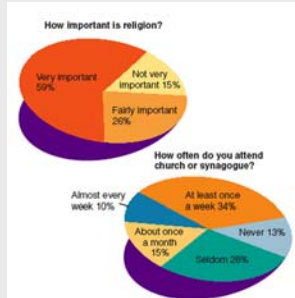
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## The New Face of Religions




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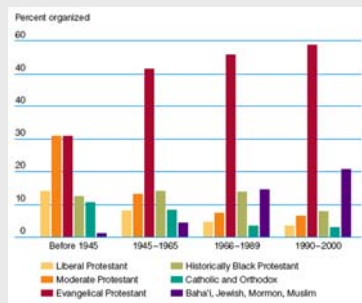
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## Religious Identification in the U.S.




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## Monotheism and Polytheism

- Monotheism is the worship of a single god.
  - Monotheistic religions typically define god as omnipotent (all-powerful) and omniscient (all-knowing).
- Polytheism is the worship of more than one god or deity.
  - Most Native American cultures do not worship a single god but see harmony in the world derived from the connection among many gods and many peoples, spirits, and the earth.

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## Patriarchal and Matriarchal Religions

- In patriarchal religions, the beliefs and practices of the religion are based on male power and authority.
- Matriarchal religions are based on the centrality of female goddesses, who may be seen as the source of food, nurturance, and love, or who may serve as emblems of the power of women

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## Exclusive and Inclusive Religious Groups

- Exclusive religious groups have an easily identifiable religion and culture, including distinctive beliefs and strong moral teachings.
- Inclusive religious groups have a more moderate and liberal religious orientation.

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## Polling Question

- How important would you say religion is in your own life?
  - A.) Very important
  - B.) Fairly important
  - C.) Not very important
  - D.) No opinion

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## Durkheim: The Functions of Religion

- Reaffirms social bonds between people.
- Creates social cohesion through religious rituals.
- Binds individuals to society by establishing a collective consciousness.

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## Weber: Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism

- Material wealth meant one was favored by God motivating Protestants to work to confirm their salvation.
- Value judgments about those who haven't succeeded can be traced to influence of religion.

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## Marx: Religion, Social Conflict, and Oppression

- Religion:
  - Legitimizes the social order and supports the ideas of the ruling class.
  - Soothes the oppressed and prevents them from rising against oppression.
  - Can be the basis for social change or social continuity.

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## Theories of Religion

### *Religion and the social order*

Functionalism	Integrative force in society.
Conflict Theory	Reflects inequality in society.
Symbolic Interaction	Socially constructed and emerges with social and historical change.

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## Theories of Religion

### *Religious beliefs*

Functionalism	Provide cohesion by promoting a sense of <i>collective consciousness</i>
Conflict Theory	Legitimize oppressive social conditions
Symbolic Interaction	Socially constructed and subject to interpretation.

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## Theories of Religion

### *Religious practices and rituals*

Functionalism	Reinforce a sense of social belonging
Conflict Theory	Define group boundaries.
Symbolic Interaction	Provide definitions of group and individual identity.

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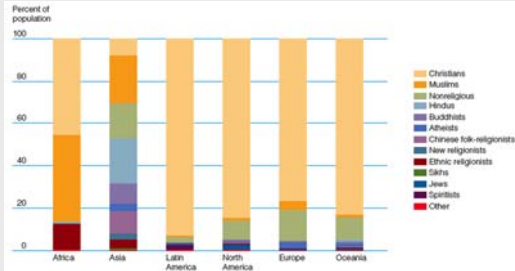
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## The World's Religions




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## Polling Question

- What is your current religious affiliation?
  - A.) Protestant
  - B.) Catholic
  - C.) Jewish
  - D.) None
  - E.) Other

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## Christianity

- Christianity developed in the Mediterranean region of Europe.
- It grew rapidly from the years 40 to 350 A.D. to encompass about 56% of the Roman empire.
- Christianity is a belief in the Holy Trinity: God, the creator; Jesus, the son of God; Holy Spirit, the personal experience of the presence of God.
- Christianity is the dominant religion in the U.S., although there is great diversity in forms of Christianity.

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## Judaism

- The Jewish faith is more than 4000 years old.
- Under Egyptian rule in ancient history, Jewish people endured centuries of slavery.
- Led from Egypt by Moses in the thirteenth century B.C., Jewish people were liberated and celebrate this freedom in the annual ritual of Passover—one of the holiest holidays.
- The Jews see themselves as “chosen people,” meant to recognize their duty to obey God’s laws as revealed in the Ten Commandments.

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## Judaism

- Jewish teachings are the source of both Christian beliefs and Islamic beliefs.
- More than 40% of the world’s Jewish population lives in the United States, creating the largest community of Jewish people in the world.
- The state of Israel, founded in 1948 as a homeland for all Jews following the Holocaust of World War II, has given Jewish people a high profile in international politics.

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## Islam

- Islamic people are found in northern Africa, southeastern Asia, and increasingly, in North America and Europe.
- Estimates are that there are now somewhere between 6 and 7 million Islamic people in the United States, one-third of whom are South Asian in origin, one-third African American, and one-quarter Arab American; the remainder are from diverse origins.

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## Islam

- Followers of Islamic religion are called Muslims.
- They believe that Islam is the word of God (Allah), revealed in the prophet of Muhammad, born in Mecca in the year 570 A.D.
- The Koran is the holy book of Islam.
- Many practicing Muslims in the United States are African Americans who observe the strict dietary habits and prohibitions against many activities, such as consuming pork, alcohol use, drug use, and gambling.

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## Hinduism

- In this religion, god is not a specific entity.
- Instead, people are called upon to see a moral force in the world and to live in a way that contributes to spiritual and moral development.
- Karma is the principle in Hindu that sees all human action as having spiritual consequences leading to a higher state of spiritual consciousness, perhaps found in reincarnation

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## Hinduism

- Hinduism is linked to the social system of India, because the caste system is seen as stemming from people's commitment to Hindu principles.
- Those who live the most ideal forms of life are seen as part of the higher caste, with the lower caste as spiritually bereft.
- Gandhi, a great world leader, used Hindu principles to guide one of the most important independence movements in the world.

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## Buddhism

- The Buddha in Buddhism is Siddhartha Gautama, born of the highest caste in India in the year 563 B.C.
- As a young man, he sought a path of enlightenment, based on travel and meditation.
- Buddhism thus encourages its followers to pursue spiritual transformation.
- Through seeking spiritual enlightenment, Buddhists see people as relieving themselves of their worldly suffering.

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## Confucianism

- Confucians follow the principles of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher who promoted certain moral practices.
- Confucianism promotes a disciplined way of life, more of a moral code than a sacred religion as there is not a particular god or set of religious disciples whom Confucians follow.
- The expression of goodness and social unity is an important principle in Confucian thought.

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## Religions Organizations

- **Churches** - Formal organizations that see themselves, and are seen by society, as the primary and legitimate religious institutions.
- **Sects** - Groups that have broken off from an established church, when a faction questions its legitimacy.
- **Cults** - Religious groups devoted to a specific cause or a leader with charisma.

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## Religious Conversion: Social Drift Theory

- People move into religious groups gradually, particularly if they have become disenchanted with their prior affiliations.
- Conversion is linked to shifting patterns of association, not mind control.
- People are active participants in the process of their own conversion, not passive creatures “programmed” with new ideas.

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## Religious Conversion: Phases

1. An experience that leads a potential convert to perceive disruption in their previous life, allowing them to be open to a serious change in the social environment.
2. An emotional bond is created between the initiate and one or more group members.
3. A period of intense interaction with the new group.

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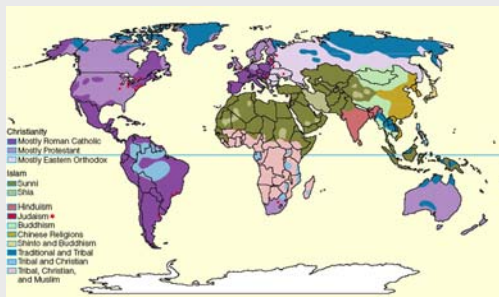
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## For Whom Is Religion Most Important?




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## Religion and Social/Political Attitudes

- Religiosity is related to a wide array of social and political attitudes.
- Racial prejudice, homophobia, and anti-Semitism are all linked to patterns of religious affiliation.
- Religious extremism develops in particular social contexts and can fuel dangerous behaviors, such as terrorism.

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## Changes in Religious Behavior

- There has been an enormous growth in conservative religious groups.
- Evangelical groups have been highly influential, particularly through their use of the electronic media as a means of communication and their affiliation with conservative political causes.
- Secularization is the process in society by which religious institutions, action, and consciousness lose their social significance.

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## Quick Quiz

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1. The institutionalized system of symbols, beliefs, values, and practices by which a group of people interprets and responds to what they feel is sacred and that provides answers to questions of ultimate meanings is known as:

- a. Religion
- b. Totenism
- c. Judeo-prescription
- d. Proscription

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Answer: a

- The institutionalized system of symbols, beliefs, values, and practices by which a group of people interprets and responds to what they feel is sacred and that provides answers to questions of ultimate meanings is known as **religion**.

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2. The majority of people in the U.S. identify themselves as:

- a. Jewish
- b. Catholic
- c. Muslim
- d. Protestant

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Answer: d

- The majority of people in the U.S. identify themselves as **protestant**.

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3. To Marx, religion is a form of:

- a. spiritual oppression
- b. spiritual flaw
- c. collective consciousness
- d. false consciousness

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Answer: d

- To Marx, religion is a form of **false consciousness**.

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4. "Religion is an integrative force in society." This statement is most closely related to:

- a. conflict theory
- b. symbolic interaction
- c. evolutionary theory
- d. functionalism

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Answer: d

- "Religion is an integrative force in society." This statement is most closely related to **functionalism**.

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5. The Koran is the holy book of:

- a. Buddhism
- b. Islam
- c. Catholicism
- d. Hinduism

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Answer: b

- The Koran is the holy book of **Islam**.

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